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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7916
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4705
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1972
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 3657
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1495
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2305
RUEHBAD/AMCONSUL PERTH 0565
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 000245

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DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, EAP/PD, G/TIP, G/AIAG, OES
NSC FOR EPHU

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPAO](#) [TBIO](#) [EAGR](#) [ID](#)
SUBJECT: BANTEN -- OUTREACH IN KEY REGION

REF: JAKARTA 131

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Classified By: Pol/C Joseph Legend Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Pol/C visited Banten Province in western Java, February 4-5. Pol/C spoke about the U.S. presidential election process to a large, friendly group of university students. Pol/C also met Banten's Governor and regional police chief, the only women to hold such positions in Indonesia. In addition, Pol/C met a popular movie star who recently entered politics, and urged him to make Avian Influenza and anti-trafficking efforts high priorities. Over all, the political situation in Banten seemed quiet. END SUMMARY.

OUTREACH TO STUDENTS

12. (U) Pol/C spoke February 5 at the University of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa, a public institution located in Serang, the capital of Banten Province. The university is focused on agriculture and engineering, and has about 8,000 students. About 175 students and faculty participated in the event. Pol/C's PowerPoint presentation focused on the U.S. presidential election, noting that House, Senate, gubernatorial and other races will also be held in 2008. Pol/C discussed Democratic and Republican Party candidates and their policy views. Pol/C also reviewed the primary and caucus schedule, with a special focus on "Super Tuesday" and what that day's results might mean for the races. He also discussed the role of the political conventions, the possibility of independent candidates, and the general election campaign, culminating in the election on November 4. Pol/C also spent some time discussing the Electoral College and how it works, noting that the next president will be inaugurated on January 20, 2009.

13. (U) The question-and-answer session was lively, with the students asking many well-informed, probing questions. Students asked whether it was really possible that the U.S. would elect its first African American or woman president. Noting that Indonesia elected its president in a direct vote, they asked whether the U.S. was a fully democratic nation given the role of the Electoral College. They also asked whether it was probable that there would be an independent

candidate running this year. Students also wanted to know about the policy views of the candidates, especially regarding Middle East-related issues.

WITH THE GOVERNOR IN BANTEN

14. (C) Pol/C and Pol FSN visited Banten, a province located on the extreme western edge of Java Island, February 4-5. Banten--which is adjacent to Jakarta and West Java Province--has about 10 million people. It is strategically located directly across the Sunda Strait from southern Sumatra. In Serang, the provincial capital, Pol/C met Governor Ratu Atut Chusiyah on February 4. Ratu Atut, 45, is the only female governor among Indonesia's 30-plus provincial and special district heads. She won a direct election to the post in November 2006 and is a member of Golkar, the largest party in the country. The Governor, who is amiable and well-spoken (and wears an Islamic head scarf), said her priorities were to develop the economy and provide jobs for constituents. Pol/C asked her about the 2009 presidential and legislative elections. She said she was only beginning to focus on those elections. She said she liked President Yudhoyono, but was not prepared to endorse him yet.

15. (C) Pol/C noted that Avian Influenza was a very serious problem in Tangerang, a Banten District which included Jakarta's international airport. The Governor said she was aware of that, adding that the provincial government was doing its best to control the disease among poultry and other birds. She said cooperation with the national government on the matter was good, but resources remained a problem. Pol/C noted the trilateral agreement involving the U.S., Indonesia and Singapore concerning Tangerang and its Avian Influenza problem. The U.S. is waiting for the pilot project linked with that agreement to be implemented. If Banten needed other assistance, the U.S. would be willing to review ways to

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assist as possible. The Governor expressed appreciation for that. She commented that she had participated in a U.S.-sponsored regional Tsunami preparedness conference in Hawaii in August 2007, which had led her to sponsor a Tsunami alert drill in late 2007 in Banten region.

MOVIE STAR TURNED POLITICIAN

16. (C) Pol/C also met Rano Karno, a popular Indonesian movie star on February 5. Karno was recently elected Deputy Mayor of Tangerang (see reftel). Karno said he had entered politics "to do good" and because he had "become bored with parties and society events." When asked, Karno, 47, said his major priority when he assumed office in March would be to improve the local economy. Pol/C noted that Karno also should seriously consider using his office and celebrity status to press two key issues: Avian Influenza and the anti-Trafficking in Persons effort. Pol/C described the nature of the Avian Influenza problem in Tangerang (Karno was not well-briefed on the subject). Pol/C also described the problem of trafficking in Indonesia and the need for robust GOI efforts at every level of government.

THE NEW POLICE CHIEF

17. (C) The new Regional Police Chief (KAPOLDA) in Banten is Rumiah Kartorejo. She is the first and so far only woman to serve in such a position in Indonesia. In their February 4 meeting, Pol/C congratulated Kartorejo, 55, on assuming the position (she just took over) and asked about her priorities. She noted that her major concerns were illegal logging, gambling and narcotics. In response to a question, she said extremist activists of the sort linked with the Jemmah Islamiyah terrorist group were not a problem in the region. Pol/C noted that the USG stood ready to assist her in any way it could, including through training opportunities for her officers perhaps involving the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Bangkok.

SEEMINGLY QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT

18. (C) Over all, the political situation in Banten seemed quiet, with contacts only beginning to focus on the 2009 presidential and legislative elections. The area is relatively conservative in terms of Islam, but at the same time has two high-level female officials: the Governor and Regional Police Chief. These two officials and Rano Karno--the actor turned politician--seem to be dynamic personalities that the USG can work with.

HUME